

MINNESOTA ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY BOARD



NOTICE OF DRAFT EIS AVAILABILITY

AND

PRE-HEARING DRAFT EIS INFORMATION MEETINGS

**Split Rock Substation to Nobles County Substation to Lakefield Junction Substation
345 kV Transmission Line and the Nobles County Substation to Chanarambie
Substation**

115 kV Transmission Line and the Nobles County Substation

Docket No.: 03-73-TR-XCEL

PLEASE TAKE NOTICE that the environmental quality board (EQB) has prepared a draft environmental impact statement (EIS) that describes and compares various routes under consideration for two new high-voltage transmission lines in Southwest Minnesota.

The Project. Xcel Energy has applied to the EQB for one route permit for two new high voltage transmission lines. The larger of the two lines is an approximately 86-mile 345-kV line running east-west from the Split Rock Substation near Sioux Falls, South Dakota, through Rock County and Nobles County, and ending at the Lakefield Junction Substation in Jackson County, MN. The other is a new 115-kV transmission line that will run approximately 40-miles northwest from a new substation near Reading, Minnesota in Nobles County to the existing Chanarambie Substation in Murray County. The proposed route permit will also designate the site for the Nobles County Substation, which will interconnect the two new transmission lines.

Pre-Hearing Draft EIS Information Meetings. A formal hearing is required before the EQB may make a final route decision. A separate hearing notice is enclosed with this EIS notice. EQB rules also require a draft EIS public comment period (see below) and a pre-hearing public information meeting to accept comments on the draft EIS, answer questions, and provide information on the upcoming hearing:

The EQB staff will hold pre-hearing information meetings from 4:00 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. at the following three dates and locations in southwest Minnesota:

- Rock County Library, Luverne, 201 West Main Street, February 2, 2005
- Lakefield Senior Citizen Center, 112 South Main Street, February 8, 2005
- Reading Community Center, 26991 200th St, Reading, February 9, 2005

Each of these pre-hearing information meetings will be held using an open-house format. You are invited to stop by when it is most convenient, to review the proposed project and maps, review and comment on the draft EIS, and to learn more about the upcoming hearings. Each meeting will also include a brief EQB staff presentation at **7:00 p.m.**, followed by an open public comment opportunity.

The purpose of the EIS comment period and pre-hearing public meeting is to make sure the information is as accurate and complete as possible. The purpose of the hearing is

primarily to take comments on the best route and conditions for the final route permit decision.

EIS Availability. Copies of the draft EIS, the permit application, and other material are available at the following libraries: Rock County Library (Luverne), Adrian Library, Nobles County Library (Worthington), Jackson County Library (Lakefield), Fulda Memorial Library, Slayton Public Library; and Chandler City Hall.

The draft EIS and other information is also available upon request from the EQB at 651-296-2571 or at <http://www.eqb.state.mn.us/Docket.html?Id=6466>. (A shorter “summary and conclusions” section of the draft EIS is also available.)

Draft EIS Comment Due Date: The EQB wants the best information possible for this route decision. Formal comments on the accuracy and completeness of the draft EIS will be accepted until **Tuesday, February 22, 2005**.

Comments on the draft EIS should be sent by February 22, 2005 by e-mail or U.S. mail to:

John N. Wachtler
Environmental Quality Board
3rd Floor Centennial Building
658 Cedar Street
St. Paul, MN 55155
e-mail: john.wachtler@state.mn.us

Public Hearing. After the close of the comment period on the draft EIS, the EQB will hold a Public Hearing on the routes and permit conditions for the proposed transmission lines and substation.

To make public participation easier, multiple sessions of the formal hearing will be held at the following four dates and locations in southwest Minnesota:

- Lakefield Senior Citizen Center, 112 South Main Street, March 1, 2005
- Wilmont Community Center, 316 4th Avenue, March 2, 2005
- Luverne Rock County Library, 201 West Main Street, March 3, 2005
- Chandler City Center, 241 4th Street, March 4, 2005

There will be an afternoon session and an evening session at each location. The afternoon session will convene at 2:00 p.m. and an evening session will convene at 7:00 p.m.

EQB Public Advisor Questions about this project, the pre-hearing information meetings, or about how to participate in the hearing process can be directed to the EQB public advisor George Johnson (651-296-2888); george.johnson@state.mn.us. The public advisor is available to answer questions about the hearing procedure and how to effectively participate, but he does not provide legal advice.